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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses individual and interfamilial processes affecting Cuban immigrant families with adolescent children. Data utilized include the results of various studies on psychological and behavioral changes related to acculturation. It is held that rate of acculturation is a function of many variables, including age, sex, and length of exposure to the host culture. Clinical variables, such as intergenerational conflict in Cuban families, are also discussed as they affect the acculturation of adolescent children. It is speculated that in families in which adolescent males exhibit an accelerated rate of acculturation, the adolescents may be presenting an acting out psychological profile. (Author/GC)

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WHAT CHANGES, WHAT REMAINS THE SAME, AND WHAT AFFECTS ACCULTURATIVE CHANGE IN CUBAN IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

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WHAT CHANGES, WHAT REMAINS THE SAME, AND WHAT AFFECTS ACCULTURATIVE CHANGE IN CUBAN IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

The simple passage of time is a basic variable in the study of developmental processes. This paper explores some of the variables that seem to change as a function of time spent in the United States. But, more importantly this paper will attempt to identify significant individual and intrafamilial processes that have occurred, perhaps as a function of the Cuban people's interaction with the United States as a host culture.

This paper, however, will focus on discussing the processes that affect Cuban families with adolescent children since the data to be presented includes primarily two studies, one of adolescents and the second of mothers of adolescents. Additional data from other studies will also be cited in order to provide additional cross validational evidence for the findings and their interpretations, and in order to provide a fuller picture of the processes that change with time.

At the individual level, the most obvious variable of study with respect to time in the U.S. is acculturation. The Cuban people have demonstrated a vertiginous rate of acculturation since their arrival to the United States. A study by Szapocznik, Scopetta, Kurtines and Aranalde (1976) demonstrated that the acculturation process can be operationalized and successfuly measured. In their study, acculturation was found to occur along two distinct and factorially independent dimensions: a dimension of self reported behaviors and a dimension of relational value orientations.

The self reported behavioral acculturation scale developed by these authors includes 24 items. The first eight items refer to language preference and usage in a variety of social and mass media contexts. The next four items refer to the nature of interactions the person has with the culture of origin or the host

culture. The subsequent three items refer to customs involved in birthdays, courtship and gestures in talking. Finally, the last nine items assess the extent to which a preferred idealized life style would be Cuban or American. The instructions for administration ask the subject to report, in a five point Likert scale, the relative frequency with which he or she engages in each behavior, ranging from the most Cuban to the most American.

The relational value orientations scale is comprised of six problem situations conceptualized in terms of Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's (1961) relational value dimension. Three alternative responses are possible for each problem situation, paralleling Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's variations in relational value orientation. Two of these variations are individuality and lineality. The value acculturation scale is scored ranging from lineality at the unacculturated end to individuality at the acculturated end. The instructions for administration ask the subjects to indicate which alternative they think is the best and which the worst, in each problem situation.

The two acculturation scales were developed following rigorous psychometric procedures. The report of these procedures and of the reliability studies for the scales are reported in the original research report by Szapocznik, et al. (1976).

In the basic validational study for the two acculturation scales, acculturation scale scores were found to covary significantly with years in the U.S. in a sample of 69 high school students. The correlation between years in U.S. and behavioral acculturation scores was .61 ($p < .00001$) and the correlation between years in U.S. and scores on the value acculturation scale was .35 ($p < .002$). Scores for both scales were also correlated separately for males and females. The correlation between the criterion variable and behavioral acculturation scale scores for males ($N=22$) was .49 ($p < .0001$) and for females ($N=47$) was .59 ($p < .00001$). The cor-

relation between years in U.S. and value acculturation scale scores for males was .31 ($p < .005$) and for females was .38 ($p < .005$).

There are four important points to note about the results of these analyses. First, for this group of Cuban youths, behavioral acculturation appears to be a linear function of the amount of time an individual has been exposed to the host culture. Second, behavioral acculturation appears to be linearly related to exposure to the host culture for both males and females. Third, reported language preference and usage, custom, habits and idealized lifestyle seem to change along the acculturative dimension more or less simultaneously. The results further suggest that the process of value acculturation does not occur as homogeneously as the process of behavioral acculturation.

Additional studies also reported by Szapocznik et al. (1976), revealed that the rate of behavioral acculturation is a function of the person's age, with young people acculturating more rapidly than older individuals. A sample of 334 first and second generation Cuban immigrants ranging in age from 14 to 85 years was classified according to psychosocial stages (Newman & Newman, 1975). This classification yielded five stages with the following age ranges: Early adolescence (13-17), later adolescence (18-22), early adulthood (23-30), middle adulthood (31-50), and later adulthood (51+).

The results indicated that psychosocial stage differences in measured behavioral acculturation are highly significant (F (4,319)= 47.01, $p < .0001$): the highest mean score was obtained by the early adolescents followed, in descending order, by each of the psychosocial stages. Second, the results also revealed that the process of value acculturation is more complex than that of behavioral acculturation, vis a vis psychosocial stage. Apparently, value acculturation scale scores were more related to psychosocial stage than age, per se. Within the Cuban immigrant sample, the highest endorsement of individuality was obtained by individuals at the stage of early adulthood. While the meaning of this

finding is not clear, the results seem to support, overall, the implications of developmental psychosocial theory. According to psychosocial theory, the major developmental tasks of this period include establishing a marriage, starting a family, developing a career, and establishing a life style-- all of which suggest that individuals at this stage should exhibit an individualistic orientation (Newman & Newman, 1975).

From the findings of a third study, also reported by Szapocznik, et al. (1976), it emerged that the rate of behavioral acculturation differs for males and females with the former acculturating more rapidly than the latter. The same sample of 334 first and second generation Cuban immigrant subjects was broken down into a male (N= 127) and a female (N= 198) group. Holding age and years in U.S. constant, the difference between males and females in mean scores for the behavioral scale was significant, $F\ (2,320) = 3.71$, $p < .05$. The findings indicated that males acculturate along the behavioral dimension more rapidly than females, and further that the difference was independent of age and length of exposure to the host culture. The difference in scores for value acculturation, however, failed to reach significance, $F\ (2,320) = 2.46$, $p < .11$, suggesting that males and females did not differ significantly in their rates of acculturation along a relational value dimension.

Implications of the Acculturation Findings at the Family Level

The findings reported were organized into a model of acculturation (Szapocznik, et al., 1976), which predicted that intergenerational differences in behavioral acculturation develop in Cuban immigrant families with adolescent children because the adolescents acculturate more rapidly than older family members. The effects of the process of acculturation on Cuban immigrant families is depicted in Figure 1. This process, illustrated by Figure 1, explains the clinically observed phenomenon that intergenerational differences in acculturation emerge in most Cuban immigrant families.

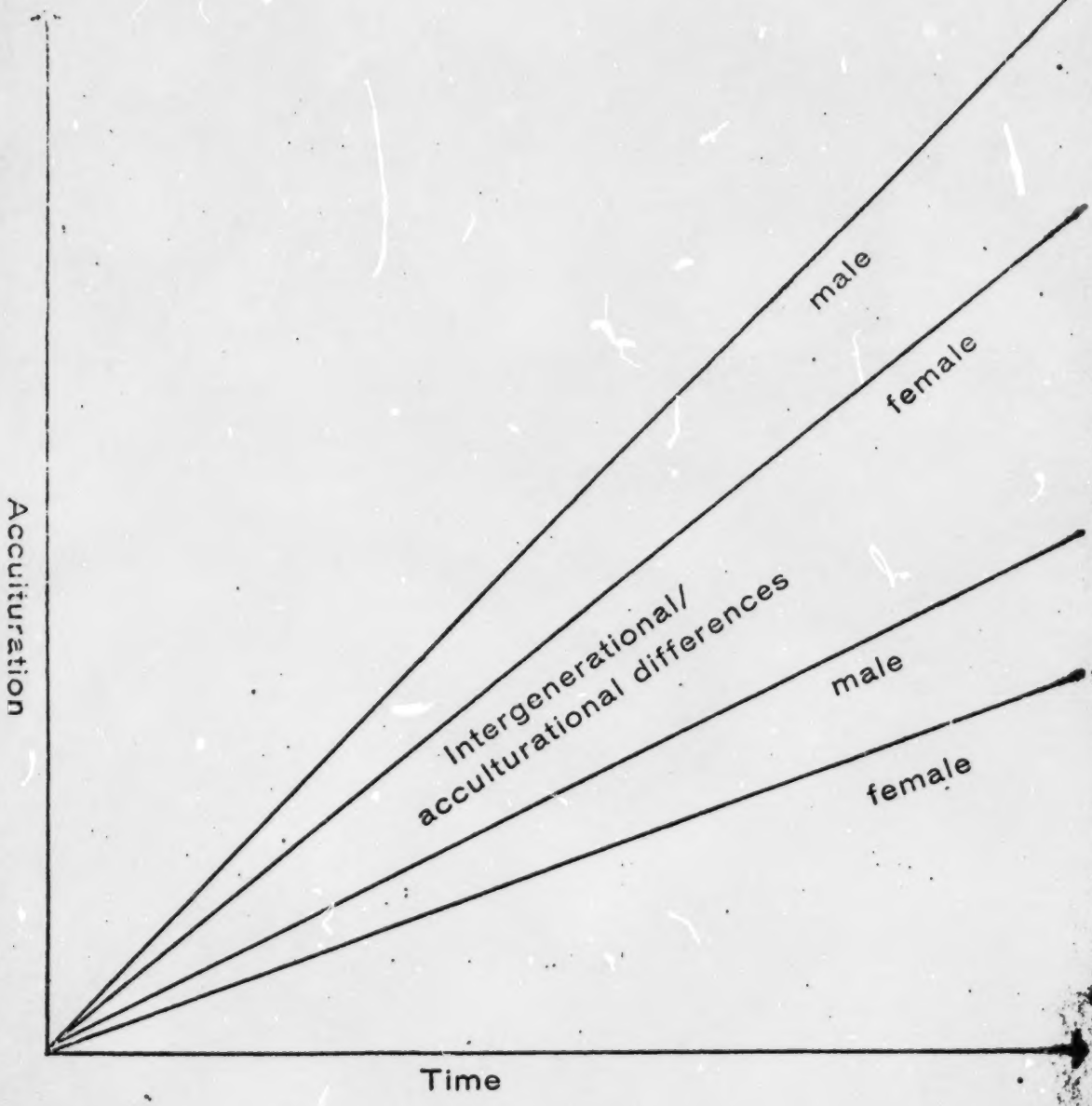

FIGURE 1. The development of intergenerational/acculturational differences as a function of time.

Clinical observations at Encuentro have also suggested that widespread family dysfunction in Cuban immigrant families may result from an exaggerated acculturational gap that seems to develop in some families. Apparently, in some families, the acculturation process is precipitated in the children and retarded in the parents. In these families, the emergent behavioral acculturational gap becomes the focus of family intergenerational conflicts. Clinical experience further suggests that in these cases, the acculturational differences are triangulated with the parental and sibling subsystems in the families. Such triangulation serves to prevent effective negotiation and conflict resolution between parents and children. Instead, the family becomes more and more polarized continuously focusing on the acculturational differences and setting the stage for the development of increasingly exaggerated acculturational intergenerational intrafamily differences.

While data addressing this issue directly is lacking, the results of a study with 110 Cuban mothers tend to support these speculations.

Cuban Mothers of Adolescent Children

In a study of 110 Cuban mothers (Szapocznik, 1976), the relationship of years in U.S. to demographic, personality and behavioral variables were studied. This sample included Cuban women who had at least one child between the ages of 13 and 24, and who had arrived in the United States since 1959. These women were chosen so that populations at risk for family conflict were emphasized, and thus the sample is not expected to be representative of the population of Cuban mothers with adolescent children, at large.

These mothers were administered the eight language preference and usage items of the acculturation scale, described above. A total acculturation score was obtained for each mother by adding the scores obtained in each of the language item. An item analysis revealed that for this sample each of the item

scores was highly significantly related ($p < .001$) to total scores, justifying adding the items to obtain a total score. As expected, these mothers' acculturation scores were significantly related to the number of years they had spent in the U.S. ($r = .26$, $p < .01$) and inversely related to age ($r = .32$, $p < .001$). As will be discussed below, the relationship between acculturation and years in U.S. was spuriously low because of abnormal pathological patterns in parts of this sample.

These 110 mothers were also administered the 16PF (Cattell, Eber, & Tatsicoka, 1970), Form B, in Spanish. Table 1 presents the correlations between 16PF scale scores, and years in U.S., acculturation scores, and age.

Surprisingly, only one 16PF scale demonstrated significant changes as a function of time spent in the U.S.: Scale I. This significant relationship would seem to suggest that as mothers' spend more time in America, they tend to become less "self-reliant" and more "help-seeking." On the other hand, whereas only one scale changed significantly in relationship to years in U.S., 14 out of the 23 16PF scales analyzed correlated significantly with changes in the level of acculturation. Although time, per se, does not seem to affect personality configuration, acculturation seems to be an important variable significantly related to personality configuration, at least in this sample of Cuban mothers.

In a closer perusal of Table 1, acculturation emerges as a process related to 16PF characteristics such as outgoing, intelligent, dominant, happy-go-lucky, venturesome, help-seeking, self-assured, extroverted, intellectually controlled, independent, compulsive, discrete, high ego strength, and low levels of anxiety. While it is not possible to ascertain the direction of causality between these variables, it would appear that mothers who acculturate are, in general, psychologically better adjusted, and viceversa those mothers who are most psychologically well adjusted tend to acculturate best.

Consistent with these assertions, it was also found that when the mothers who perceived role conflicts around their role as mothers were separated into (1) mothers who did not perceive strong opposition from their children toward

TABLE 1

Correlations between 16PF scale scores and (1) years in U.S.; (2) acculturation; and (3) age.

16PF Scales	Years in US	Acculturation	Age
(A) Reserved/Outgoing	.02	.32***	-.19**
(B) Less/More intelligent	.11	.23**	.13
(C) Low/High Ego strength	-.02	.30***	.05
(E) Submissive/Dominant	-.02	.34***	-.09
(F) Serious/Happy-go-lucky	-.01	.40***	-.16*
(G) Expedient/Conscientious	-.04	.02	-.14
(H) Timid/Venturesome	.14	.45***	-.16*
(I) Self-reliant/Help-seeking	.20*	.20*	-.06
(L) Trusting/Suspicious	.04	-.14	-.04
(M) Practical/Imaginative	.08	-.06	.03
(N) Naivette/Shrewdness	-.09	-.04	.02
(O) Self-assured/Apprehensive	.09	-.19*	.12
(Q1) Conservative/Experimenting	-.11	.10	-.11
(Q2) Group dependent/Self-sufficient	-.15	-.13	.05
(Q3) Lack of control/Ability to bind anxiety	.05	.08	.16*
(Q4) Relaxed/Tense	.09	-.07	-.13
(I) Introversion/Extraversion	.09	.49***	-.24***
(II) Low/High anxiety	.07	-.23**	-.02
(III) Emotionally/Intellectually controlled	-.01	.24**	-.09
(IV) Subdued,dependent/Independent	-.01	.22**	-.08
(V) Compulsivity/Sociopathy	.13	-.27**	.03
(VI) Lack of restraint/Discreteness	-.03	.36***	-.08
(VII) Objectivity/Subjectivity	.11	.09	.13

the parents' traditionally Cuban child rearing customs, and (2) mothers who perceived strong opposition (serious intergenerational family conflicts) from their children for taking a traditionally Cuban stand on child rearing issues, the latter mothers with the most serious conflicts were significantly less acculturated ($t = 2.38$, $p < .02$), although they had been in U.S. a nonsignificantly ($t = -1.71$, $p < .09$) longer period of time.

It would appear then, that acculturation, at least as measured by language usage and preference is a functional process for Cuban mothers; achieved by mothers who are psychologically well adjusted; and, in turn the achievement of this process by mothers seems to generate in them psychological health and greater family harmony. Further, the mothers exhibiting less acculturation tend to also exhibit a more neurotic personality constellation. Conversely, consistent with the nature of neurotic behaviors, mothers presenting this kind of personality profile are less likely to learn new acculturated behaviors. Finally, and as speculated earlier, mothers of families in which the intergenerational conflict is most intense (most like clinical families) demonstrated a retarded acculturation process in contrast to mothers not reporting these intense family conflicts. These findings support the notion that exaggerated acculturational differences across generations co-occur with disrupted and conflicted family settings.

Further Implications

It was suggested by Scopetta, King, and Szapocznik (1975) that the emergence of exaggerated intergenerational acculturational gaps within Cuban families led to family dysfunctions. As suggested by Szapocznik et al.'s (1976) acculturation study, even within the normal process of acculturation, adolescent males are expected to acculturate most rapidly, and their mothers are likely to be the nuclear family members acculturating most slowly. Thus, it would appear that the greatest disparities in acculturation within the family would occur among adolescent males and their mothers, and that it is in these two populations,

adolescent males and mothers of adolescent males, that the effects of acculturation related dysfunctions should be most evident.

Consistent with these speculations, the mothers reporting the most serious family intergenerational conflict were found to be least acculturated. The data presented herein also reveals that in these mothers the lack of acculturation is related to a maladjustive neurotic personality profile as measured by the 16PF.

Moreover, it is also suggested that there is another side to the family intergenerational conflict schema presented. It was indicated that retarded acculturation in Cuban mothers is related to a neurotic syndrome and that regardless of which is the cause and which the effect, this acculturation-related process in Cuban mothers appears to be dysfunctional and to occur in highly intergenerationally conflicted families. The other side of the family conflict story is speculated to be that adolescent males who belong to these same intergenerationally conflicted families should present an accelerated acculturational process. It is further speculated that the accelerated acculturational process in maladjusted male adolescents may also be accompanied by a pathological personality configuration, or more appropriately with adolescents, a dysfunctional psychosocial profile.

It could be hypothesized that just like inhibited acculturation processes are related to neurotic syndromes in Cuban mothers, accelerated acculturation processes in young Cuban adolescents are related to uninhibited, active, perhaps acting out syndromes.

Data presented by Ladner (1976) would seem to provide some support to these speculations. Ladner indicated that there are two distinguishable populations in outpatient treatment at Encuentro: middle aged women presenting neurotic symptomatology and young males presenting acting out profiles.

Summary

It would appear that what changes and what stays the same is a function of

many variables. For one, measurable changes clearly takes place along a dimension that is measured by the Szapocznik et al.'s(1976) behavioral acculturation scale, and less regularly along the same authors' relational value acculturation dimension. It would also appear that change along an acculturative dimension is primarily a function of length of exposure to the host culture. But actually, age and secondarily sex, may be important moderators of the rate of acculturation. In fact, in the upper ranges of age, age may be a more important determinant of acculturation, than time of exposure to the host culture, per se.

Important clinical variables, both at the individual and intrafamilial level may affect what changes and particularly the rate of acculturative change. The process of acculturation seems to be affected in certain families, in which the process becomes precipitated in the youngsters and retarded in the parents, causing in these cases the kinds of intergenerational differences that have frequently been found in disrupted families. The data indicates that in these cases of high intergenerational conflict, the mothers, whom as we have said, have had a retarded acculturation process, will also present a more maladjusted neurotic personality profile. It was speculated that in these same families, in which adolescent males may be exhibiting an accelerated rate of acculturation, the adolescents may be presenting an acting out psychosocial profile.

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